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Tiffany - A rice pudding - 1889

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A RICE PUDDING

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A RICE PUDDING

A Comedy in Two Acts

BY

ESTHER B. TIFFANY

AUTHOR OF "THAT PATRICK" AND "YOUNG MR. PRITCHARD"

BOSTON

Walter H. Baker & Co.

1889

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CHARACTERS

JOHN RICHARDS.

DR. THWAITE *A young physician*

MRS. RICHARDS *Young wife of Richards*

MARION *Younger sister of Richards*

ELLEN O'SHAUGHNESSY *A cook*



W

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NOTE.—The ladies can be partially dressed for the reception, under their big aprons, in Act I., and the room can be partly cleared by Richards during Mrs. R.'s and Marion's conversation on the dress, which would make only a short wait between the acts necessary.



William Brewster

A RICE PUDDING.

ACT I.

SCENE. — *Dining-room of new house. Room filled with packing boxes, pictures, rolls of carpets, shades, tubs, kitchen utensils, etc. Enter MRS. R. and MARION in high-necked, long-sleeved aprons.*

MRS. R. (*despairingly*). Not a carpet down but this !

MAR. Painters and plumbers all over the house !

MRS. R. The furnace not in !

MAR. Not a chair to sit on —

MRS. R. Or a table to eat off of —

MAR. Or a bed to sleep on —

MRS. R. Or a servant to cook anything —

MAR. Or anything to cook !

MRS. R. And yet they all promised faithfully to have everything in order by to-day.

MAR. It hardly looks as if we could have our reception here by next Thursday, does it ?

MRS. R. Why, I had been thinking we might take a leisure hour this morning to write the invitations — but it doesn't look much like leisure hours !

MAR. Come, let's unpack the china, anyway.

MRS. R. There ! the boxes are still nailed up, and Peter promised to have them all ready for us. Never mind, we'll hang the pictures. Where's the step-ladder ? Oh ! here.

MAR. Now, I'll climb up, and you hand me the picture. I think the Madonna would look well here — don't you ? (*Mounts ladder.*)

MRS. R. Got it ? Quick ! I cannot hold it —

MAR. Wait !

MRS. R. Oh, there ! we've smashed it. (*Between them picture falls to floor.*)

MAR. John will say we ought to have waited for him.
(*Descends ladder.*)

MRS. R. Did you ever see anything like the way those painters have splashed these windows? Will it ever come off? Why, who's that?

(*Enter ELLEN.*)

ELLEN. And this is the house I was to come to?

MRS. R. Oh, there you are at last! Take your things right off, and begin on these dirty windows.

ELLEN. Shure an' it wasn't to wash windys I hired out.

MRS. R. (*to MARION*). It's true. I didn't stipulate anything about washing windows. I engaged her to cook.

MAR. (*aside*). Well, you'd better set her at cooking, then.

MRS. R. (*aside*). Very well. (*To ELLEN.*) On the whole, you may go into the kitchen and cook.

ELLEN. And what wull I be afther cookin'?

MRS. R. (*aside*). Very true again. What can she cook? We shall have to send her out for provisions. (*To ELLEN.*) Well — er — let me see — what's your name?

ELLEN. Miss Ellen O'Shaughnessy.

MRS. R. Ellen? Oh, that will never do. My name is Ellen, too.

MAR. Haven't you any other name?

ELLEN. Shure an' my other name's Miss O'Shaughnessy.

MRS. R. Well, haven't you any middle name — or nickname — that they called you at home?

ELLEN (*reflecting*). They used to call me cabbage-head when I went to school.

MRS. R. I think I'll call you Nelly.

ELLEN. Shure an' it's you we moight call Nelly, and me stick to me rightful name.

MRS. R. (*to MARION*). Do you think she means to be impertinent, Marion? We must assert our dignity at any cost.

MAR. No — she's only a cabbage-head, as she says.

MRS. R. Very well, Nelly. The other servants haven't come yet, so you'd better go yourself and buy some provisions. You can get some — some —

MAR. Potatoes.

MRS. R. Yes — potatoes.

ELLEN. How many?

MRS. R. (*aside*). How many, Marion?

MAR. Oh, dear, I wish I had my cook book. Why, I suppose — we are such a small family — about — a — quart.

MRS. R. (*to ELLEN*). A quart of potatoes.

ELLEN. A quart of pertaties — is it?

MRS. R. And some — some —

MAR. Rice — John is very fond of rice.

MRS. R. Oh, yes — rice. (*Aside*.) How much? A peck?

MAR. Yes — I suppose so.

MRS. R. (*aloud*). A peck of rice —

ELLEN. Peck of rice —

MRS. R. And a pound of butter — and a pound of flour — and — and —

ELLEN. A pound of flour, did ye say?

MRS. R. (*with dignity*). I said a pound of flour. (*Aside*.) Marion, you don't think she's laughing — do you?

MAR. Why, I don't see anything to laugh at.

MRS. R. No, of course. Only I shouldn't want her to suspect that we've neither of us kept house before.

MAR. Why, Ellen, as if I hadn't been to cooking-school —

MRS. R. I know it, Marion. If I hadn't you to fall back on, what should I do? What meat shall we have?

MAR. Steak is the easiest.

MRS. R. (*to ELLEN*). Some steak.

ELLEN. Wan slice?

MRS. R. One slice? Mercy, I could eat a whole slice myself! Four — five slices — and a quart of spinach — and — and — a loaf of bread — and — well that will do for the present. We'll have an early dinner to-day. You can broil the steak, and cook a quart of rice — and boil the potatoes and the spinach — and have it ready at one o'clock. Here's some money.

ELLEN. I'll ax wan o' thim nice-lookin' plumbers to go along wid me. (*Exit*.)

MRS. R. How was my manner, Marion? Not too dignified?

MAR. You did beautifully.

MRS. R. I don't want to be too dignified. I don't want to have my servants afraid of me.

MAR. I don't think she looked exactly afraid of you.

MRS. R. A knock! Come in!

(*Enter THWAITE*.)

THWAITE (*bowing*). I beg your pardon. I tried to ring the doorbell, but there seems to be no doorbell yet.

MRS. R. Oh, no, there is — isn't any — anything — yet.

THWAITE. My name is Thwaite. I have the good fortune to be your next-door neighbor, and, as I noticed you were moving in to-day, I just ran over to see if there were not some way in which you could make me useful.

MRS. R. You are very kind, Mr. Thwaite.

MAR. We are extremely obliged.

THWAITE. Not at all.

MAR. We are rather at a standstill.

MRS. R. Perhaps, if it wouldn't be asking too much, we should like that box opened.

THWAITE. I'll go and find a hammer. (*Exit.*)

MRS. R. Marion, we'll ask him to the reception.

MAR. I wonder if my pink surah will do.

MRS. R. No, indeed. You are to wear your white net.

MAR. Men are convenient sometimes.

(*Enter THWAITE.*)

THWAITE. This box? (*Opens box.*) There you are. What next?

MRS. R. That barrel, if it's not asking too much!

THWAITE. Only too happy. Might I be permitted? (*Unbuttons coat.*)

MRS. R. Oh, certainly. (*THWAITE takes off coat.*)

MAR. You are getting all dusty. Here, take this apron. (*Buttons THWAITE into apron, which has been lying across box.*)

THWAITE. Now I am ready for anything.

MRS. R. Come, Marion, we'll be unpacking the china. (*They unpack the china while THWAITE works on barrel.*)

MAR. (*running to mantel.*) We'll have these two vases here.

MRS. R. And the clock in the middle. Oh, Mr. Thwaite, can you lift that heavy clock off of the ironing-board, so that we can get some idea how the room will look when everything is in order?

THWAITE (*lifting clock with difficulty*). I can say with truth this is the first moment in your company that time has hung heavy on my hands. (*Puts clock on the mantel.*)

MRS. R. I wish time were always so quickly disposed of.

MAR. I am glad you were not tempted to kill time by smashing the clock.

MRS. R. (*ecstatically*). How sweet it looks there! Stand back both of you and see what a lovely effect! The clock in the middle, and those two vases on either side.

MAR. Beautiful!

THWAITE. Stunning!

MRS. R. How pleased he will be!

THWAITE (*aside*). What he? Oh, yes — their father — the old gentleman I have noticed overseeing the workmen.

MRS. R. Never mind about that barrel now, Mr. Thwaite; let's hang pictures.

THWAITE. The profession of hangman is new to me, but I will do my best. (*Mounts step-ladder with picture.*) I am rather afraid, under the circumstances, of so long a cord.

MAR. Afraid?

THWAITE. Yes. Give a man rope enough, you know, he'll be sure to hang himself. There — is that straight?

(*Enter ELLEN*)

ELLEN. The range is a-roarin' awful.

MRS. R. Oh, Marion, you know all about ranges.

MAR. (*aside*). I wish I had my cook book. (*Aloud.*) Very well, Nelly, I'll see what's the matter. (*Exit.*)

MRS. R. (*sitting down on lowest round of ladder, talking up to THWAITE*). We'll wait till she comes back. She's the one to settle about the pictures.

THWAITE. Is your sister artistic?

MRS. R. Yes, indeed. Artistic, and literary, and scientific, and all that sort of thing, but lately he's given that up, and has gone into cooking.

THWAITE. Cooking?

MRS. R. Yes — and she knows everything that is to be known about cooking — theoretically. She has been to cooking-school.

THWAITE. Graduated with honors, I suppose.

MRS. R. Yes, indeed. We are going to keep the house together. I don't know what I should do without her knowledge. She's begun writing a cook-book, too.

THWAITE. Illustrated?

MRS. R. Oh, certainly. It's going to be lovely. She made such a charming sketch for the book, the other day, of some boiled potatoes; only by the time she had finished, the potatoes were all cold, and didn't taste as nice as they might; but, then, as long as she had forgotten to add salt, and boiled them about a half hour too long, it didn't so much matter.

THWAITE. She goes into things very thoroughly, doesn't she?

MRS. R. Yes, that's her way ; and she's *so* original, too. Most of her receipts are to be original.

THWAITE. I must have a copy of the book as soon as it's out.

MRS. R. Perhaps you've noticed how occasionally she goes off into a fit of abstraction. It used to be that, when she looked that way, she was composing sonnets, but now it's puddings.

THWAITE. I wish she would compose me a pudding.

MRS. R. And she's *so* practical.

THWAITE. I should hardly have thought it.

MRS. R. No, you wouldn't, to look at her. But, now, she wanted to make some jelly for her cousin's wedding breakfast, and she hadn't any mould of the right size, and so what do you think she took.

THWAITE. I can't imagine.

MRS. R. Why, an old lard pail — empty, of course.

THWAITE. Yes, I should have advised having it empty.

MRS. R. And moulded the jelly in it, and it turned out beautifully, only, you know, on the bottom of the pail they have stamped in large letters, "superfine lard," and, when she turned the jelly out, there was "superfine lard" in big letters right on the top.

THWAITE. I don't doubt it tasted just as well.

MRS. R. Well, I don't know about the taste exactly. You see, she had happened to forget to put any sugar or flavoring in it — but, then, it was so original of her to think of using a lard pail.

THWAITE. Yes, I don't believe anybody but a very literary person would have dreamed of moulding jelly in a lard pail.

(*Enter MARION.*)

MRS. R. Well, Marion?

MAR. There's something very queer about the stove. I wonder if Mr. Thwaite —

THWAITE. Yes, do let me take a look. (*Exeunt THWAITE and MARION.*)

MRS. R. It's the most evident thing! He's deeply smitten with Marion. Yes, we must have the reception, and she shall wear her white net. How interested he was to hear all about her. And how delightful to think of dear Marion being married and settled so near me. Why, we can sit at our windows and talk to each other across the lawn. But

the fence must come down. (*Enter MARION*) Marion, the fence must come down, mustn't it? and we'll have a little gravel path —

MAR. What are you talking about?

MRS. R. (*confused*). Oh, nothing — I — but what was the matter with the stove?

MAR. Oh, the draught was turned wrong. Men seem to know so much. (*Enter THWAITE.*)

THWAITE. There's thunder in the air — look out for squalls. (*Enter ELLEN.*)

ELLEN. An' 'tain't me that'll stay in a poverty-stricken house, where I ain't got no mop, nor no dish-pan, nor no soap, nor —

MRS. R. Oh, yes, we have. There's the mop hanging on the umbrella rack — and the dish-pan — oh, Mr. Thwaite, will you lift the Venus of Milo out of the dish-pan?

THWAITE. I'm afraid the Venus wouldn't be very handy at washing dishes.

ELLEN. An' soap.

MRS. R. Soap? I certainly saw a bar of soap somewhere. Oh, there — sticking out of the coffee-pot.

ELLEN. An' sure I niver hired out before where they kep' the mop on the umbrella stand and the soap in the coffee-pot.

MRS. R. Oh, we don't usually. You see, we are in a little confusion as yet. (*Aside to THWAITE.*) I am beginning to be afraid she may be a little quick tempered.

THWAITE. The same suspicion crossed my mind.

ELLEN. An' wull it be in the front parlor I'll find the brilin' iron?

MRS. R. Oh, no, it's downstairs — I'll show you —

(*Exeunt MRS. R. and ELLEN.*)

MAR. I had no idea housekeeping would be so bewildering.

THWAITE. You look quite exhausted. Do take a coal scuttle. (*Tips up a coal scuttle.*)

MAR. (*seating herself on coal scuttle*). Where will you sit?

THWAITE. Oh, nothing could be more comfortable than this preserving kettle. (*Seats himself on kettle.*)

MAR. I am afraid we have been encroaching on your time.

THWAITE. That's what most people seem to be afraid of doing since I have put out my shingle.

MAR. Oh, yes, you are a physician. I forgot.

THWAITE. So do most people.

MAR. I wonder if you couldn't help me in the medical part of my cook book.

THWAITE. I should be charmed —

MAR. And, by the way, have you a grandmother?

THWAITE. I have had several.

MAR. Several?

THWAITE. My paternal grandfather married four times.

MAR. How convenient.

THWAITE. Do you think so? I have always found four separate sets of uncles and aunts horribly confusing.

MAR. I mean for me.

THWAITE. For you?

MAR. Yes. I'm interested in grandmothers on account of the archæological portion of my cook-book. I have collected a number of receipts which have been handed down from generation to generation.

THWAITE. Oh, I thought they were to be purely original.

MAR. All but the archæological portion. Why, there's one cake, made of honey and figs, that has come down from the days of Homer.

THWAITE. It isn't a trifle musty by this time — is it?

MAR. And as you have had so many grandmothers, I'm sure they must have handed you down some delicious receipts. (*Takes out note-book.*)

THWAITE (*musings*). Let me see. There was a kind of apple-doughnut I used to have at Grandmother Blossom's.

MAR. (*writing*). Just the thing. Apple doughnuts. How were they made?

THWAITE. Well — you take some apples —

MAR. How many?

THWAITE. Oh, as many as you can conveniently carry up in your apron.

MAR. (*writing*). Apron full of apples.

THWAITE. Lots of spice.

MAR. (*writes*). Spice.

THWAITE. No end of sugar.

MAR. (*writes*). Sugar.

THWAITE. Same amount of butter.

MAR. (*writes*). Butter — eh — isn't the receipt a trifle vague?

THWAITE. Why, I should think their vagueness was one

of the chief charms of archæological receipts. If you want commonplace, exact receipts, you can find them in any ordinary cook-book.

MAR. Of course. But haven't we left something out? Apples, spice, sugar, butter — oughtn't there to be some flour?

THWAITE. Oh, yes — flour to taste. And fry half an hour in boiling fat.

MAR. And what heading shall I put to the receipt as regards its wholesomeness? I always make them like this, "Bread, nutritious; mince pie, nightmare-ish; codfish, good for brain, etc."

THWAITE. I think you might mark this receipt "fatal."

MAR. You seem to have survived it.

THWAITE. Oh, well, survival of the fittest; but I sometimes think it was responsible for Grandfather Blossom's having had so many wives.

MAR. And now can't you give me some items to go under "Domestic Economy."

THWAITE. Grandmother Blossom, number four, used to say that housekeeping was cheaper for two than one. You might make a note of that.

MAR. (*writing*). Two than one.

THWAITE. And I have heard that Grandmother Blossom, number three, used to say that a young physician would never get into practice till he got married. Might note that down, too.

MAR. I think I have heard that before, and I hardly think I could put that down under the head of Domestic Economy — could I?

THWAITE. Might set it down under the head of Domestic Bliss.

(*Enter Mrs. R.*)

MRS. R. (*enthusiastically*). Oh, Marion! The tinman has just sent up the loveliest colander, and the sweetest little saucepan, with a tin cover and a knob on top, and lunch will be ready soon, so let's set the table.

THWAITE (*rising*). By the way, where is the table?

MRS. R. Oh, yes, I forgot.

THWAITE. Suppose —

MRS. R. (*finger on lip*). Hush! Look at Marion. She has an idea.

THWAITE. A sonnet, or a pudding?

MRS. R. Neither. Some strikingly original suggestion about a table. You'll see.

MAR. Why not lay the ironing-board across two tubs?

MRS. R. (*triumphantly*). There — didn't I tell you?

THWAITE. Great head!

MRS. R. (*to THWAITE*). Please lift Dickens and Thackeray out of the washtub?

THWAITE. Rather needless, wasn't it, putting Dickens and Thackeray into the washtub? If it had been Ouida now, or Zola — (*They tip up two tubs and lay the ironing-board across.*)

MRS. R. Now, the table cloth. There's one in the box. (*Lay cloth.*) We haven't any cream, but I'll put the silver cream jug on, for looks, and I'm dying to see my pretty new plates. (*They set table.*) There! Doesn't it look sweet? How pleased John will be!

THWAITE (*aside*). John! Who's John, I wonder, and when is the paternal likely to turn up?

MAR. Here comes Nelly.

(*Enter ELLEN, with large platter of rice.*)

MRS. R. My patience, Nelly! What did you cook all that rice for? I said only a quart.

ELLEN. An' shure an' there's anythur dish as big as that. (*Exit.*)

MRS. R. She said they called her cabbage-head, and I don't wonder!

THWAITE. Why don't you call her Cabby for short?

(*Enter ELLEN, with another large platter of rice.*)

ELLEN. There, mum. (*Exit.*)

MAR. Do you know, Ellen, I remember now that rice has a very queer way of swelling when cooked. I don't believe it was all her fault, after all.

(*Enter ELLEN with a small vegetable dish.*)

MRS. R. What is in that little empty dish?

ELLEN. Shure an' it's thim greens. (*Exit.*)

THWAITE (*examining dish*). No, it's not empty. In the furthest corner I do see a flabby, pale, greenish deposit that might be spinach.

MRS. R. And I told her to cook a whole quart. I am sure she ate the rest herself.

MAR. Ellen, I'm afraid — it just occurs to me that spinach has a very extraordinary way of shrinking when cooked — hasn't it, Dr. Thwaite?

THWAITE. I believe it is rather of the shrinking, modest-violet type of vegetable.

(Enter ELLEN with another vegetable dish.)

MRS. R. What! Only one potato! Why didn't you bring in the rest?

ELLEN. Rest? There ain't no rest. Didn't ye ax me to buy a quart of pertaties, and didn't this pertaty fill the measure? (Exit.)

THWAITE. No "small potatoes" about that cook.

(Enter ELLEN with pile of steaks on platter.)

MRS. R. Why, Nelly! Did you buy out the meat market?

ELLEN. Shure an' ye ordered four slices of steak.

MRS. R. Slices?

MAR. Ellen, it occurs to me that a slice of steak is a different thing from a slice of beef or mutton — isn't it, Dr. Thwaite?

THWAITE. I have a vague idea of some such invidious distinction.

MRS. R. Well, never mind. Let's sit down. Oh, don't put on your coat, for if you do, it will make us feel as if we ought to do our hair and take off our aprons. May I trouble you to carve, Dr. Thwaite? (They all sit down.)

THWAITE. The first meal at your own — ironing-board.

MRS. R. Yes, isn't it charming? I always knew I should adore housekeeping!

MAR. Don't let's ever board again?

MRS. R. But John was right, after all, about its taking some time to get settled. Why, I fully expected by lunch time to-day to have the house in perfect order and be sitting down with my fancy work.

MAR. So did I. A little rice, Dr. Thwaite?

THWAITE. Thanks. Oh, not so much, please. I mean to leave a little for you to sketch for your cook-book.

MRS. R. (to THWAITE). She's in a brown study again. (Aloud.) What is it, Marion?

MAR. Oh, nothing — merely I was inventing some rice-pudding receipts. This rice will last us several weeks.

MRS. R. (aside to THWAITE). Frugal, too, you see. (Aloud, dubiously.) We couldn't have rice pudding at the reception, could we? We shall expect you at our reception, Dr. Thwaite.

THWAITE. With pleasure; and may I have some rice pudding at the reception?

MRS. R. All you want.

(Enter ELLEN.)

ELLEN. There's a lady downstairs as wants to spake to yer.

MRS. R. Not a caller?

ELLEN. She's afther sayin' she just run round to look at the house and the family in case she'd think of hiring out here to do second work.

MRS. R. (*rising*). Oh, yes, that must be the parlor girl I engaged.

THWAITE (*rising; to ELLEN*). Tell the lady downstairs that if she wants reference for these people to come to me. I can give them both excellent characters. (ELLEN *tosses her head*. *Exeunt* MRS. R., MARION, and ELLEN.)

THWAITE. Well, it's an ill wind that blows nobody good. If I had been overrun with patients, I should not now be enjoying the privilege of making a Chinaman of myself, eating rice. Charming girls—especially—rather mean, though, of old paterfamilias to flaunt such a siren in the face of a lonely bachelor like myself. Shouldn't wonder if I might be called in to attend him—rather a choleric old chap as I remember. Used to hear him going for the carpenters. (*Continues eating; enter* RICHARDS.)

RICH. (*aside*). A man! That's not very queer, though, as there are men all over the house. He hardly looks like a painter, however, or a plumber, either. Eating! Actually eating off my ironing-board. Seems quite at home, too. Best china out, and the silver. Ahem!

THWAITE (*turning round*). Oh! (*Aside*.) Paterfamilias. (*Aloud, and rising*.) Good day, sir.

RICH. Good day.

THWAITE. The ladies are below, interviewing a servant. I am your next-door neighbor. I was able to render them some trifling service, and they kindly invited me to lunch. (*Tries to unbutton apron; aside*.) How does the confounded thing come off?

RICH. I see. Very much obliged for your kind attentions.

THWAITE (*aside*). Looks it. (*Aloud*.) Not at all. Your charming daughters tell me—

RICH. My what?

THWAITE. Your charming daughters, sir; daughters, too — if I may be permitted to say so — that any man might be proud of. (*Struggles with apron. Aside.*) Confound it! I defy Alexander the Great to assert his dignity attired in a checked pinafore!

RICH. Daughters, sir? What daughters, sir? What age do you take me for? Talk about wives, and you'll come rather nearer the truth.

THWAITE (*aside*). Wives — wives! He's a perfect old Mormon.

RICH. One of those ladies you refer to is my wife.

THWAITE (*relieved*). Oh — only one! (*Aside.*) Which? Fatal question. (*Aloud; agitated.*) May I ask you, sir, if the young lady with the beautiful complexion and lovely hair and exquisite smile — is your wife?

RICH. I didn't ask your opinion of my wife's complexion — or hair or smile.

THWAITE. I'm quite aware of the fact — but — but — is she — your wife?

RICH. Yes, sir; she certainly is, and has been so this twelve months.

THWAITE (*aside*). So that claim's pre-empted! And yet I rather fancied she liked me. Well — the safest course for me is not to see her any more. (*Aloud.*) May I trouble you to unfasten my pinafore?

RICH. Certainly.

THWAITE. Thanks. (*Puts on coat.*) Perhaps, as I can be of no further assistance, I will take my leave. A physician's duties, you know —

RICH. Oh, do not let me detain you a moment from your patients. Some of them may be dying this very minute.

THWAITE. I shouldn't be at all surprised if they were.

RICH. (*aside*). Nor I.

THWAITE. May I trouble you to carry my good-by to your — to the ladies?

RICH. It will give me great pleasure.

THWAITE. Good afternoon.

RICH. Good afternoon. (*Exit THWAITE.*)

RICH. Took me for the father of my own wife! Impudent young whipper-snapper! Because I happen to have a few gray hairs, he sets me down as an antiquated — superannuated —

(*Enter MRS. R.*)

MRS. R. Oh, John! I thought you'd never come! Isn't it lovely? I never was so happy in all my life. Doesn't the clock look sweet on the mantelshelf? Dr. Thwaite put that up, and the picture, too, and opened the box of china, and fixed the stove, and gave Marion lots of points for her book, and — but, by the way, where is he?

RICH. At the bedside of a dying patient.

MRS. R. Oh, called off, was he? Isn't it lovely that he lives just next door?

RICH. (*sternly*). It strikes me, Ellen, that is a decidedly childish, not to say infantine, garment of yours.

MRS. R. What? My pinafore?

RICH. For a woman, a married woman, I should call it a most undignified article of attire. Some fool might almost take you — for — for my daughter.

MRS. R. Oh, it isn't only the fools that do that, John, dear — Oh, and I want to tell you, we've decided on next Thursday for the reception.

RICH. What reception?

MRS. R. Our reception. And Dr. Thwaite's coming, and Marion is going to wear her white net, and I'm going to wear —

RICH. A white wig and a gown of your grandmother's.

MRS. R. What?

RICH. A gown of your grandmother's, I say. Look here, Ellen, I've had about enough of this. Either you've got to give up society, or you must dress in a manner more accordant with my years. I'm tired of being taken for your father.

MRS. R. Then you won't let me have the reception?

RICH. I've given you the conditions.

MRS. R. You can't really mean I'm to dye my hair and wear an old dowdy —

RICH. If you really cared for me, you would take pleasure in dressing in a more dignified —

MRS. R. Oh, John! What has come over you! You are joking.

RICH. Joking? I feel like joking. No — not a word more. I won't have any and every young sprig making love to you, and treating me as if I were an octogenarian.

(*Enter MARION.*)

MAR. The furniture is come.

MRS. R. (*despairingly*). Oh, Marion!

MAR. What's the matter? (RICHARDS retires up, and begins to carry out things, and put room to rights.)

MRS. R. It's all over!

MAR. What?

MRS. R. The reception! And I was so counting on his seeing you in your white net! Marion, you know I love you; there is nothing in the whole world I would not do for you — I would sacrifice myself for you in any conceivable way — except — why, even for your sake, you know — I really couldn't go to a reception in an unbecoming dress.

MAR. What are you talking about?

MRS. R. John refuses to let me appear in anything but an old gown of grandmother's. He doesn't like it because I look so young. And I've got to dye my hair white, too. Isn't it dreadful? What shall we do? Oh, Marion, you are beginning to look abstracted! What is it? Have you an idea? Pretend it's a novel, can't you? What would you do if it were in a novel?

MAR. Oh, in a novel nothing would be more simple.

MRS. R. Well!

MAR. You would put on that lovely brocade of your grandmother's, and some old lace, and powder your hair — that's always becoming, you know —

MRS. R. Oh, yes!

MAR. And you'd look so perfectly bewitching —

MRS. R. Marion!

MAR. That every one would fall in love with you.

MRS. R. But John wouldn't like that!

MAR. Even Dr. Thwaite would be carried off his feet. (*Tragically.*) John becomes wildly jealous; there is a duel — Dr. Thwaite, overcome with honorable remorse at having wrought such desolation in a previously peaceful household, fires his bullet into the air —

MRS. R. Oh!

MAR. While John, swept away by jealous rage, aims full at his adversary's heart. Dr. Thwaite falls at my feet —

MRS. R. (*excitedly*). Oh, shall we be present?

MAR. Hoarsely crying, "Fly for your life! The police are on our track!" John escapes through the pantry window.

MRS. R. Oh, he couldn't — he's too stout. He'd stick fast. Not the pantry window, Marion.

MAR. (*resuming natural tone*). You little goose!

MRS. R. Oh, Marion, why will you work me up so? I declare, I seemed to see dear John stuck fast in the partry window, and those horrid policemen after him.

MAR. You'd never do for an authoress. Why, I can imagine the most blood-curdling situations and never once wink.

MRS. R. Well, I think it's very unkind of you, after all Dr. Thwaite's attentions, to kill him off in cold blood like that. But come, let's take a look at grandmother's brocade. It's up in one of the trunks.

MAR. You surely are not thinking of —

MRS. R. There is no harm in looking at it —

MAR. Ellen, you are out of your mind — This is not a romance.

MRS. R. (*aside*). It will be before I am through with you and Dr. Thwaite. (*Aloud*.) There's no harm in looking at it anyway. Come on. (*Exeunt*.)

RICH. (*coming forward*). Poor little soul! Perhaps I was a trifle hasty with her. But, then — to be taken for her father!

(*Enter ELLEN, who begins to clear table.*)

ELLEN. Shure an' your darters and their young man might have waited for yer, I'm a-thinkin'.

RICH. Daughters!

ELLEN. An' you sich an ould gint, too! Niver ye moind, tho', you'll soon be a-gettin' wan of 'em off your hands —

RICH. What are you talking about?

ELLEN. I know which of us three I'd have picked out if I'd had the chice, but he didn't seem to be of my way of thinkin'.

RICH. Do you know that you are referring in a most insulting manner to my wife?

ELLEN. Your what?

RICH. My wife — Mrs. Richards.

ELLEN. Wife is it? Ahem! (*Aside*.) That little laughin' crature in a pinafore that knows about as much housekapin' as wan of my grandmother's little curly-tailed pigs. (*Exit*.)

RICH. What did she mean by the "ahem"? There seemed to be a good deal of hidden meaning in that ahem. I'll dye my hair — she shall wear a wig — she shall put on her grandmother's dress.

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE. — *The same room in order. At one side, buffet with dishes and remains of collation. Enter RICHARDS in evening dress.*

RICH. Six, no, seven consecutive times have I been complimented on the beauty of my daughter. Daughter, indeed! When she told me she had agreed to my conditions, and would appear in a gown of her grandmother's, I fondly fancied she was coming to a realizing sense of her position as a married woman. Gown of her grandmother's! She never looked so blooming and girlish in her life. Well — I must go back and see what young fool is at present asking her about the health of her venerable, paternal relative.

(*Exit RICH., R. Enter THWAITE in evening dress, L.*)

THWAITE. My dancing days are over! How entrancing she does look this evening! I was a fool to have come, but what excuse could I give! To be sure, I might have brought on a dying patient. At least, I have avoided her all the evening. We have not exchanged two words. She probably thinks me an unmannerly cub for my pains. Strange fatality that for the last three days we have constantly run across each other. Yesterday we discussed Ruskin for a half hour in the horse-car, and the day before had a most absorbing conversation on Esoteric Buddhism in the butcher's shop, while waiting to pay for our beef and sausages.

(*Sits himself in large chair, front. Enter ELLEN, who goes to buffet.*)

ELLEN. Jelly — an' i-scream an' grapes an' cake an' sandwiches — an coffee! As if I wouldn't 'a' made all them things as well as that — that — whaty callum — that craterer! Didn't I live out two whole wakes at an iligant place, where the gentlemen of the fam'ly sat down ivery blissed avnin' to cinder all dressed up so foine in their dimond pins an' ox-tailed coats, atin' swaller-tailed soup out of rale old Injiny chany? Bedad, tho', I've kep' the women folks out of my kitching. They was all for makin' the jellies and cakes themselves, but I soon showed 'em who was boss in that kitching. They'd give me warnin', only they darsn't. That jelly (*tastes jelly*) ain't bad, — nor the i-scream naythur. I'll just be afther puttin' a handful in my pocket for my

cousin Patrick, poor b'y. He'll be a-comin' round to the pantry windy about this toime, I'm thinkin'. (*Perceiving THWAITE.*) Saints presarve us! That young feller!

THWAITE. Oh, Cabby — that you?

ELLEN. I was afther clarin' up.

THWAITE. Clear away.

ELLEN. I will. (*Aside.*) Shure an' I'll clar out. My, but that i-scream feels could in my pocket. (*Exit, L.*)

(*Enter MRS. RICHARDS, R., in old-fashioned brocade, lace, jewels, and powdered hair.*)

MRS. R. I wonder where John is. Poor fellow, he looks so disturbed! He never used to be so irritable. For some reason Marion's receipts don't seem to agree with him exactly. It's very odd. (*Perceives THWAITE.*) Oh, Dr. Thwaite!

THWAITE. Oh! (*Confused.*)

MRS. R. Dr. Thwaite, neither my sister nor I have exchanged a word with you this evening.

THWAITE. No — I — that is —

MRS. R. You are not looking yourself. Overwork? Patients too many for you?

THWAITE. No. I can't conscientiously say my patients are too many for me.

MRS. R. We hoped you might be in again and lunch with us.

THWAITE. You are very kind.

MRS. R. Dr. Thwaite, what is it? Have we offended you in any way? I hoped we were going to be such good friends.

THWAITE. So did I —

MRS. R. Well, what is there to prevent it?

THWAITE. I think I must be saying good evening.

MRS. R. I am sure you are in trouble. I never saw anything so gloomy as your expression.

THWAITE. Don't you think a man has a right to be gloomy when he finds the woman he loves the wife of another?

MRS. R. (*startled*). Wife of another? (*Aside.*) Does he mean me?

THWAITE. I see you think me very indelicate to speak of it, but my apparently boorish behavior needed some explanation, and then, to tell the truth, I fancied you more than half suspected it already.

MRS. R. Oh, no — I — (*Aside.*) It's all come about just as Marion predicted! This unfortunate gown of grandmother's is at the bottom of it, for I am sure it was Marion he fancied at first. Marion said he would be bewitched, and now — oh, dear — the duel — John — the pantry window! What is to be done?

THWAITE. I have offended you, I fear.

MRS. R. Oh, no — that is — you couldn't help it, you know. It wasn't your fault.

THWAITE. No — the sweetness, the loveliness of the rarest of women —

MRS. R. Please don't, you mustn't — (*Aside.*) Oh, I wish he wouldn't. (*Aloud.*) And you have done very right to avoid an interview this evening.

THWAITE. Have I appeared like an utter boor?

MRS. R. Oh, no — no, indeed.

THWAITE. It is so hard to avoid accidental meetings. What would you advise about it?

MRS. R. I should advise strongly that you sold your house — broke up your practice — and left for — for the Sandwich Islands — to-morrow —

THWAITE. You think there is no other honorable course?

MRS. R. No other. And then the feelings of a husband — Have you considered the frightful consequences if his suspicions were once aroused?

THWAITE. No, I hadn't.

MRS. R. Just think if he should call you out, and there should be a duel! You, overcome with honorable remorse at having wrought such devastation in the bosom of a previously united family, would, without doubt, fire your bullet into the air, but the unfortunate husband, carried away by rage and jealousy, would aim at your breast —

THWAITE. Is he a good shot?

MRS. R. You would fall at our feet, crying hoarsely, "Fly for your life! The police are on our track!" John would escape through the pantry window — no, not the pantry window —

THWAITE. I should be sorry to inconvenience him to such an extent. I shall leave to-morrow for the Sandwich Islands.

MRS. R. You'd better leave this very minute. Oh, dear, there's some one coming now! It may be John! Just hide in the china closet a minute till he goes. He's ripe for

pistols already. (*Exit THWAITE into closet. Enter MARION.*) Oh, Marion, is that you?

MAR. (*listlessly*). Well, the last one is out of the house. (*Sits herself at table with head on hand.*)

MRS. R. Wasn't it a great success?

MAR. Oh, of course.

MRS. R. You seemed to see a good deal of that Mr. Golding.

MAR. Did I? I forget.

MRS. R. What makes you so dreamy, Marion? Composing a pudding?

MAR. (*starting up*). I detest puddings!

MRS. R. (*aside*). Detest puddings! She is far gone, poor girl!

MAR. And as for that Dr. Thwaite of yours —

MRS. R. (*aside*). Of mine! She little knows how nearly she hits the truth.

MAR. He didn't even have the grace to bid me good night.

MRS. R. Oh, as for that, dear, he didn't bid me good night, either.

MAR. Then he is a perfect boor.

MRS. R. Hush, Marion, I wouldn't speak quite so loud.

MAR. Why not?

MRS. R. Walls have ears, you know.

MAR. I did not know that John had contracted for any in these walls.

MRS. R. Then some belated guests might at this very moment be in the china closet.

MAR. A belated mouse, probably.

MRS. R. (*mysteriously*). Marion, we shouldn't judge people too harshly. Poor Dr. Thwaite may have his reasons —

MAR. Reasons!

MRS. R. Still I think, dear, from what I have observed of his character, that you had better put him out of your thoughts altogether.

MAR. As if I had ever wasted one thought upon him.

MRS. R. No, of course not! Besides, he leaves to-morrow for the Sandwich Islands.

MAR. Sandwich Islands!

MRS. R. So we shall not be troubled any more by his bad manners.

MAR. Who told you he was to leave for the Sandwich Islands?

MRS. R. (*mysteriously*). Marion — I am older than you — in experience, I mean — if not in years. I am a married woman, and that counts for a great deal. Dr. Thwaite may be very charming and all that, but I feel it my duty to tell you that he is what you might call fickle and decidedly immoral.

MAR. This afternoon you could not say enough in his praise.

MRS. R. I own I had other views for him, but I find his affections are otherwise and hopelessly engaged.

MAR. How do you know?

MRS. R. Don't ask me, Marion.

MAR. You must tell me.

MRS. R. And if he seems at times a little distraught and unmannerly, we must drop a tear for one who has lived to see his love another's bride!

MAR. Another's bride!

MRS. R. The Sandwich Islands were my suggestion. Otherwise — John — the duel — the pantry window — the —

MAR. You don't mean to tell me it's you he —

MRS. R. Oh, Marion! there's nothing like you for finding out things!

MAR. So it's all come true!

MRS. R. Yes — just as you predicted. Only, if you knew how it would turn out, why did you persuade me into wearing this gown of grandmother's!

MAR. I persuade you!

MRS. R. But I don't give up hope yet, and, after all, I think the idea of the Sandwich Islands was quite an inspiration, because, you know, one of your plans was to go on a mission to teach the heathen Mrs. Lincoln's receipts for brown bread and fish-balls.

MAR. The Sandwich Islanders are not heathens, Ellen; they were Christianized in the year —

MRS. R. Why, they must be, Marion, if they don't know how to make fish-balls, and on an island, too, where they are just surrounded by fish. I should think it would be a deed of charity for some one to go and teach them the best use of their opportunities. And if you should go, you would, of course, meet Dr. Thwaite — a small group of islands, you know — why, you would probably run across him the first

time you went out for a walk, and he would be so astonished, and would say —

MAR. Nothing at all. I would not give him a chance to speak. I would sweep by him icily like this.

MRS. R. Oh, Marion! But if he felt awfully hurt, and the next day sent you round a superb basket of — of well, some tropical flowers — what would you do then?

MAR. Send them back without a word.

MRS. R. How unkind! But if — if — oh, you go on, Marion! Where would you meet again, do you suppose?

MAR. Our next meeting would perhaps be at the royal court.

MRS. R. Oh, yes! Go on!

MAR. Where Dr. Thwaite had been called in to attend his majesty —

MRS. R. Of course! Go on!

MAR. I to teach the queen —

MRS. R. (*clapping her hands*). Mrs. Lincoln's receipts for fish-balls! Do go on!

MAR. I should be discovered negligently leaning against a towering palm, attired in a modified costume of the Sandwich Islands.

MRS. R. (*doubtfully*). I've heard they wore Mother Hubbards. Do you think you would look well in a Mother Hubbard?

MAR. Dr. Thwaite, reduced to a state of despair at my coldness, comes humbly forward, hat in hand, "Miss Richards," he says, "am I wrong in surmising that in some unexplained manner I have incurred the unmitigated misfortune of having offended the gentlest of her sex?"

MRS. R. (*admiringly*). I never heard Dr. Thwaite talk like that, but then in the Sandwich Islands there's no knowing what one mightn't do.

MAR. I straighten myself up — like this — move off haughtily a few steps — turn my head — so — reach out my right hand to open the door of the Queen's private apartments, remarking, "Your conduct, Dr. Thwaite, admits of no" — (*Throws open china-closet door.* THWAITE discovered seated on cake-box. *Tableau.*)

MRS. R. Of all unfortunate —

MAR. (*recovering herself, and slamming door*). So that is your belated guest! Good-night! I'm going to bed. (*Exit.*)

MRS. R. Oh, Marion — forgive me! You don't hate me, Marion? She's gone!

THWAITE (*peeping through crack*). Coast clear?

MRS. R. No — no! Go back! I hear some one else! (THWAITE *closes door*.) Poor Marion! Now she will cry herself to sleep. All the fault of grandmother's gown!

(*Enter* RICHARDS.)

RICH. So this is the way you evade my injunctions!

MRS. R. Evade? I obeyed them to the letter. Sha'n't we go into the library?

RICH. And you call that your grandmother's gown?

MRS. R. It is really, John. (*Shivering*.) This room is so cold.

RICH. And that is the way your grandmother dressed her hair?

MRS. R. Oh, yes. I copied it from an old portrait. (*Yawns*.) I'm so sleepy.

RICH. And did I tell you to put on those ridiculous high-heeled slippers?

MRS. R. I thought they would make me look taller. Dear me! It's past twelve!

RICH. How about that patch of black court-plaster on your cheek?

MRS. R. Why, John, I put that on to cover up my dimple!

RICH. The wiles of women!

MRS. R. It's striking the quarter.

RICH. Do you know, madam, that owing to this ridiculous attire, you were taken for my daughter ten consecutive times?

MRS. R. I'm awfully sorry. I am really, John. I'll never do it again. I'm just as unhappy about it as you are — more so — I've made such a muddle of everything, and I want you to promise that whatever happens you'll do nothing rash.

RICH. Rash! When was I ever rash, except in trying Marion's puddings. (*Enter ELLEN, with tray of glasses*.)

MRS. R. Oh, Nelly, you needn't go in there. I'll put those away — I'll — (ELLEN, *opening china-closet door, and starting back, drops tray*.) Murder! Fire! Bugglers! (*Exit hastily*.)

(*Enter* THWAITE *from china closet, holding saucer and spoon*.)

THWAITE (*eating deliberately*). A most extraordinary pudding!

MRS. R. I shall faint!

RICH. (*amazed*). Well, sir.

THWAITE. Having been promised some rice pudding if I came to the reception, and seeing none on the table, and being something of a dyspeptic — salads, ices, and coffee at night every physician condemns — I was just looking about in the closet, and came across this most remarkable pudding.

MRS. R. (*aside*). How cleverly he got out of it! He's almost as original as Marion. What a pair they would have made!

RICH. Oh, if rice pudding is what you are after, you may have all you find. We have lived on rice pudding for the past four days.

MRS. R. That's one of Marion's own original receipts.

THWAITE (*trying to hide a wry face*). So I judged. I never tasted anything in the least like it.

MRS. R. She would be so pleased to hear you say so. Her chief aim in cooking is to do original work.

THWAITE. She certainly succeeds.

MRS. R. Sometimes I think I should like to try and be original, too.

RICH. Oh, one original in the family is quite enough.

MRS. R. It's so pleasant to see you enjoy it! Her efforts (*glancing reproachfully at RICHARDS*) are not always so appreciated.

THWAITE (*aside*). So the old brute doesn't even appreciate what a jewel he has for a wife. I'll stand up for her. (*Aloud.*) Sir, a pudding of this kind is an epoch in one's gastronomic history.

RICH. Yes. I think you'll find it quite an epoch in your gastronomic history at two o'clock to-morrow morning.

MRS. R. (*aside*). He had the nightmare last night, and attributes it to that pudding.

THWAITE. What! A simple little rice pudding!

MRS. R. Yes; a simple little rice pudding. However, it isn't quite as simple as it might be. There are a number of — rather unusual ingredients in it. Did you taste the honey?

THWAITE. Honey? It did strike me as being quite sweet — but that did not surprise me, considering who made it.

MRS. R. (*aside*). Why, he still seems to have a lingering fondness for Marion after all. Probably from her being my sister-in-law. (*Aloud*.) I think, though, the honey is a little overpowered by the flavoring. We have different tastes, and, to please all round, Marion put in a tablespoonful each of vanilla, lemon, orange, almond, and rose water.

THWAITE. So you can take your choice.

MRS. R. Exactly. Then there is some filling that was left over from the mince pies.

THWAITE. I think I did run across the filling.

MRS. R. And some citron and suet left over from the plum pudding. Marion would be worth a fortune to a poor man — she never wastes a scrap.

THWAITE (*pensively*). She would indeed! I think I recall striking some citron.

MRS. R. And then —

THWAITE (*pointing to pudding*). What would you call that, now?

MRS. R. That? Let me see.

THWAITE. It looks like an olive.

MRS. R. You are right. Now, who but Marion would have dreamed of putting olives into a rice pudding?

RICH. Who, indeed!

THWAITE (*aside*). His tone is positively insulting.

MRS. R. She's quite fond of combining honey and olives. She says it's so classical. She says the Greeks and Romans were devoted to olives and honey.

RICH. More fools they!

MRS. R. Not that she calls this a severely classical production. She says this pudding is conceived more in the spirit of the Renaissance.

THWAITE. It does seem to lack the Archaic simplicity of the ordinary rice pudding.

MRS. R. (*aside*). How appreciative he is! Now, when Marion told John about its being conceived in the spirit of the Renaissance, John only sniffed, and said that many more such Renaissances would be the death of him! And to think that but for me Dr. Thwaite might at this moment be engaged to Marion with a fair prospect of having just such a pudding for dinner every day of his life!

THWAITE. And how about the steak that was left over from lunch that first day?

MRS. R. Oh, we had that as hash. Marion is especially happy in her hashes.

RICH. A happiness which I for one have no desire to share.

MRS. R. (*aside to THWAITE*). So clever of you to have got out of the difficulty as you did. So much easier, you know, and pleasanter, eating that pudding than fighting a duel.

THWAITE (*dubiously*). Y-es. But I fear I am keeping you up. May I trouble you, Mr. Richards, to give my adieux to your wife?

MRS. R. (*aside*). What is he talking about?

RICH. Do you object to doing so in person?

THWAITE. By no means. Where is Mrs. Richards?

RICH. Where, sir? Why, there, sir — two feet from your nose.

THWAITE. There! (*Aside.*) My first suspicions were correct, after all! He is a Mormon! (*Aloud.*) Then that lady is your wife, too?

RICH. Two? One, sir — number one. I never had another.

THWAITE (*agitated*). Did I not distinctly understand you, sir, the other day, to state that the lady with the beautiful complexion and lovely hair and exquisite smile was your wife?

RICH. And I should like to know, sir, if that lady there has not a beautiful complexion, and lovely hair, and an exquisite smile?

THWAITE (*confused*). Why, now I come to observe — her — certainly — without doubt.

MRS. R. (*aside*). Now that he comes to observe me! Well, I'll have to forgive him for Marion's sake.

THWAITE. And the lady who made the rice pudding?

RICH. Is, I blush to say, my sister, Miss Richards.

THWAITE (*aside*). No Sandwich Islands for me!

MRS. R. (*aside*). What a goose I've been! (*Aloud.*) If you'd like to say good night to Miss Richards yourself, I think you'll find her on the front stairs. (*Aside.*) I hear her sobbing there this minute.

THWAITE. Thanks. (*Exit.*)

MRS. R. To think, John! He had not even observed I was not bad looking!

RICH. Just like his impudence.

MRS. R. But we must forgive him for Marion's sake.

RICH. Oh, yes, I will forgive him.

MRS. R. And how convenient it will be to have a physician in the family. So cheap, you know. And we can almost talk to each other from our windows. The little fence must come down, however, and we must have a gravel path — all just as I planned. And oh, John, you can't think how thankful I am that it's turned out as it has, and I'll never do it again, and if you'll forgive me this time, I'll try and grow older just as fast as I can, and —

(Enter ELLEN in extraordinary bonnet.)

ELLEN. I've come to giv warnin'!

RICH. That bonnet is certainly a warning.

MRS. R. Not at this hour, surely!

ELLEN. An' shure it's becuse it is this hour that me an' the other girls have been a-talkin' it over, an' we've come to the conclusion that a house where you can't go into the chany closet of an avnin' widout matin' a bugglar a-sittin' on a cake box atin' cold rice puddin' ain't no place for a dacent gurl.

RICH. You idiot! it wasn't a burglar —

MRS. R. (*aside*). Sh! John, don't say a word. I've been dying to get rid of the whole lot ever since they came, but I haven't dared. A housekeeper needs a great deal of nerve.

RICH. So does a housekeeper's servant.

MRS. R. Besides, it's true Dr. Thwaite is a sort of burglar, for he stole our Marion. (*Aloud.*) Very well, Nelly, I'll pay you all, and you may go. (*Goes to desk.*)

RICH. But who the Dickens will get the breakfast?

(Enter MARION and THWAITE.)

THWAITE. Allow me to present to you your next-door neighbor.

MRS. R. Oh, Marion! (*Congratulations.*)

RICH. (*drawing THWAITE apart*). Sound constitution?

THWAITE. Perfectly.

RICH. Strong digestion?

THWAITE. I could digest nails.

RICH. Unfortunately, I cannot.

THWAITE. I'm very sorry to hear it.

RICH. It's very unfortunate. Nothing like dyspepsia for making a man irritable; plays the devil with one's temper; and yet she's a good girl — a very sweet girl. I am very fond of Marion.

THWAITE. Who could help being?

RICH. And if you are perfectly sure your digestion is all right —

THWAITE. Oh, perfectly.

RICH. (*enthusiastically*). Then you are just the husband for Marion, and I feel convinced that my own health and happiness will be materially increased by the match.

ELLEN. You've paid up honest, and I'll tell 'em at the Intelligence office you was inexperienced but well manin'.

RICH. But we haven't settled yet who is to get breakfast —

MAR. Oh, I'll get breakfast.

MRS. R. and THWAITE. Of course — Marion will get breakfast. (RICHARDS *looks greatly disturbed.*)

CURTAIN.

LIST OF PLAYS.

ARRANGED BY NUMBER OF CHARACTERS, MALE AND FEMALE.
FURTHER PARTICULARS IN REGULAR LIST.
PRICE GIVEN AFTER EACH PLAY.

Where a play is known under two titles, both are given as separate plays, in this list only.

TWO CHARACTERS. — One Male, one Female.

An Original Idea . . . 15

THREE CHARACTERS. — Two Males, One Female.

Box and Cox 15	Mary Moo 15	Silent Woman 15
Unprotected Female . . . 15		Which Shall I Marry? 15

One Male, Two Females.

Apples 15	Two Flats and a Sharp 15	Which will Have Him? 15
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FOUR CHARACTERS. — Two Males, Two Females.

Bouquet 15	Census Taker 15	Fairy's Father 15
Give a Dog, etc. 15	Mr. Joffin's Latchkey 15	Madam is Abed 15
Match Makers 15	None so Deaf as those	Putkins 15
Personal Matter 25	who Won't Hear . . . 15	Zerubabel's Second Wife 15

Three Males, One Female.

Bombastes Furioso . . . 15	The Tempter 15	Sailor's Return 15
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FIVE CHARACTERS. — Three Males, Two Females.

Anonymous Kiss 15	Doubtful Victory 15	Under a Vell 15
Cousin Tom 15	My Son Diana 15	Nature and Philosophy 15
Done on Both Sides . . . 15	Two Buzzards 15	To Oblige Benson . . . 15
Sylvia's Soldier 15	Appearances are De-	Welsh Girl 15
Ugly Customer 15	ceitful 15	The Youth who Never
Blue and Cherry 15	Don't Judge by Ap-	Saw a Woman 15
	pearances 15	

Two Males, Three Females.

Kiss in the Dark 15	My Husband's Secret 15	Poor Pillcaddy 15
	Phantom Breakfast . . 15	

Four Males, One Female.

Only a Clod 15	Two Heads are Better	Trumpeter's Daughter 15
	than One 15	

SIX CHARACTERS. — One Male, Five Females.

The Only Young Man in Town 30

Three Males, Three Females.

Aunt Charlotte's Maid 15	My Sister's Husband . 15	Sarah's Young Man . . 15
Always Intended . . . 15	Never Say Die 15	Two Puddifoots 15
	Your Life's in Danger 15	

Four Males, Two Females.

Dandelion's Dodges . . . 15	John Wopps 15	Sunshine through the
Drop Too Much 15	Nurse Chickweed . . . 15	Clouds 15
From Information I Re-	Needless Stratagem (A) 15	Soldier, Sailor, Tinker,
ceived 15	Once on a Time 15	and Tailor 15
I've Written to Brown 15	Slice of Luck (A) . . . 15	We're All Teetotalers 15
	Sullivan, The Slugger 15	

Five Males, One Female.

Advice to Husbands . . . 15		Diamond Cut Diamond 15
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Two Males, Four Females.

Eliza Carisbrooke, etc. 15	How the Colonel Pro-	Jane's Legacy 25
	posed 15	

35. new.

Boston Dip	15	Comrades	25	Peace and Quiet	15
Bowled Out	15	Don's Stratagem	15	Smashington Golt	15
Bit of Brummagem	15	My Turn Next	15	Silverston's Wager	15
Brother Bill and Me	15	Mysterious Disappear-		Thirty Minutes for Re-	
Class Day	25	ance	15	freshments	15
		Poison	25		

Dora	15	John Dobbs	15	Slasher and Crasher . .	15
Free Ward (The) . .	15	Old Honesty	15	Seeing the Elephant . .	15
		Poor Peter	15		

Bread on the Waters . . . 15	Husband to Order . . . 15	Little More Cider . . . 15
Flower of the Family . . . 15	John Smith 15	My Brother's Keeper . . . 15
His Last Legs 15	Last Loaf (The) 15	Nicholas Flain 15
	Little Brown Jug (The) 15	

Another Glass . . . 15	Dunducketty's Picnic 15	Midnight Banquet . . 15
Down by the Sea . . 15	Hit Him, He has no Friends 15	On and Off 15

Among the Breakers . . .	15	Damon and Pythias . . .	15	Lying will Out . . .	15
Bull in a China Shop . . .	15	Game of Dominoes . . .	15	Mrs. Walthrop's Back- sellers . . .	25
Duchess of Dublin . . .	15	Lost in London . . .	15		

Coupon Bonds	25	Flowing Bowl (The)	25	Miller and his Men	15
Enlisted for War	15	Home Guard (The)	15	Paddle your Own Canoe	15
Ella Rosenberg	15			Shaker Lovers	15

Both Alike 15	Cleft Stick (The) . . . 15	Lords of Creation . . 15
	Old and Young . . . 15	

Babe	25	The Miller's Wife	15	The "Tomboy"	15
Giralda	15	Our Folks	15		

Lost Mine (The) . . . 25	"Nevada" . . . 25	Our Boys of 1776 . . . 15
	One Hundred Years Ago 15	

Above the Clouds 15 | The Christening 15

26. new.

TWELVE CHARACTERS.—Nine Males, Three Females.

Ticket of Leave Man 15 | **Wife's Secret (The)** 15

Ten Males, Two Females.

Eight Males, Four Females.

Gaspardo, the Gondolier 15 | **Fool's Revenge (The)** 15

OVER TWELVE CHARACTERS.

Aladdin 15	Jeweller's Apprentice 15	Scarlet Letter 15
Babes in the Woods 15	Lady of Lyons 15	School for Scandal 15
Captain Kyd 15	Lady of the Lake 15	Stolen Will (The) 25
Clari 15	Monseigneur 15	Golden Butterfly (The) 25
Dumb Girl of Portici 15	Maid of Milan 15	Two Orphans (The) 25
East Lynne 15	Masaniello 15	Virginia Veteran 25
Forced to the War 25	Naaman, the Syrian 25	Wallace 15
Hero of Scotland 15	Octoroon (The) 25	Zelina 15
Hunchback (The) 15	Poor Gentleman 15	Blue and Gray, or Star of Empire 30
Hamlet 15	Past Redemption 25	
Hidden Hand 15	The Stranger 15	

MALE CHARACTERS ONLY.

Number of Characters given instead of price, which is uniformly 15 cents each.

Coals of Fire 6	Man with the Demijohn 4	Stand by the Flag 5
Close Shave 6	My Uncle the Captain 6	Shall Our Mothers Vote 11
Freedom of the Press 8	New Brooms Sweep Clean 6	Two Gentlemen in a Fix 2
Gentlemen of the Jury 12	Public Benefactor 6	Too Late for the Train 2
Great Umbrella Case 32	Pedlar of Vervynice 7	Thief of Time (The) 5
Great Elixir 9	Rival Poets 2	Tender Attachment 7
Humors of the Strike 8	Runaways 4	Very Pleasant Evening 3
Hypochondriac (The) 5	Ready-made Suit 35	Wanted, a Male Cook 4

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15 cents each, except Rebecca's Triumph, which is 25 cents.

Aunt Mchitable's Scientific Experiment 6	Greatest Plague in Life 8	Red Chignon 6
Champion of Her Sex 8	The Grecian Bend 7	Rebecca's Triumph 15
Dog that will Fetch, &c. 6	Love of a Bonnet 6	Tipsy Pudding 8
Eliza's Bonafide Offer 4	No Cure, No Pay 7	Using the Weed 7
	Precious Pickle 7	Voyage of Life 9

MUSICAL AND OTHER PLAYS FOR CHILDREN.

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Accelerate—operatic charade 15	College Ned—operetta 15	Merry Christmas 15
Bachelor's Christmas 25	Dorothy's Birthday—operetta 25	R. E. Porter 75
Bunch of Buttercups 15	Diamonds and Toads—operetta 15	Santa Claus Frolics 15
Christmas Carol 15	Fairy of Fountain 25	Santa Claus First 25
Centennial—charade 15	Holidays 15	Santa Claus at Home 20
Conjuration—operatic charade 15	Hunt the Thimble 50	Seven Ages—Tableaux ent. 15
	Lost Children 15	Titania 25

MUSICAL ALLEGORIES FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS ONLY.

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	Tournament of Idyl-court 15	War of Roses 15

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Anonymous, shadow pantomime 25	H. M. S. Pinafore, opera 15
Arabella and Lionel, pantomime 15	In Pawn, shadow pantomime 25
A. Ward's Wax Figger Show 25	Jenny Lind, operetta 15
Bon Bons, musical and dramatic entertainment 25	Sculptor's Triumph, tableau ent. 15
Capuletta, operatic burlesque 15	Snow Bound, musical and dramatic entertainment 25
Cinderella, shadow pantomime 25	Orpheus, shadow pantomime 25
Drink, shadow pantomime 25	

27. new.

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